

24. (Amended) A method for manufacturing the **image-forming apparatus** according to Claim 23, wherein the degassing step is **executed prior to the baking step**.

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 13 being independent.

The independent claims and selected dependent claims have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended toward their representative during the personal interview of August 28, 2001.

The interview focused primarily on independent Claims 1 and 13 and the art of record. In addition, U.S. Patent No. 5,760,538 was brought to Applicants' attention.

Claims 1-8, 10-20 and 22-24 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over EP '721 (Kawade) in view of Kato '708 and Shinichi (JP '748). Additionally, Claims 9 and 21 stand rejected as allegedly being obvious over those citations and further in view of Wallace '563. For the reasons set forth below, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' claimed invention is patentable over the cited art.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention is directed to a method for manufacturing an airtight vessel. The method includes the steps of activating a getter disposed in the vessel prior to sealing the vessel, and after activation of the getter, initiating a baking step to seal the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel.

Claim 13 relates to a method for manufacturing an image forming apparatus using an airtight vessel containing a plurality of electron emission elements and image-forming members. As in Claim 1, the method includes the steps of activating a getter disposed in a vessel prior to sealing the vessel and, after activating the getter, initiating a baking step to seal the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel.

As will be appreciated, the claims have been amended to recite that the baking step is initiated after activating the getter. Support for these amendments are provided, for example, in Figure 8 and in the accompanying specification beginning on page 28, line 12. In accordance with Applicants' invention, an airtight vessel providing superior performance and a long life can be economically provided.

The primary citation to Kawade relates to an electron-emitting device that includes, as part of a display panel, an envelope 88 (see Figure 8). As discussed at the interview, Kawade teaches activating the getter only after sealing the envelope (see page 20, lines 9-12).

The secondary citations to Kato and Shinichi were cited to compensate for the deficiencies in Kawade. Kato is directed to a method of making an ultra-high vacuum field emission display that includes an airtight package. Although Kato discloses using two getters, Kato is not understood to teach or suggest initiating a baking step to seal the vessel after activation of the getter. In Kato, the activation temperature of the first non-evaporable getter material 120 is provided during the sealing and evacuation steps during the fabrication of UHV FED 100 (see column 3, line 66 through column 4, line 2 (emphasis added)).

Shinichi relates to an image display device that includes a container as part of the display and also discloses the use of two getter materials. The first getter material is stored in

the container and the second getter material is stored in either a second container or an exhaust pipe attached to the first container. Shinichi is also not understood to teach or suggest initiating a baking step to seal the vessel after activation of the getter.

Accordingly, even assuming, arguendo, the art could have been combined, such a combination still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-8, 10-12 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

The patent to Wallace relates to a method of making a field emission device and was cited for its teaching of providing means for reactivating a non-evaporable getter.

Wallace fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in the citations as discussed above with respect to Applicants' independent claims. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 9 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is also respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1 and 13 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 2-12 and 14-24 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

FOURTH SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In compliance with the duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56, the Examiner's attention is directed to the document listed on the enclosed Form PTO-1449. A copy of the listed document is not being provided, however, because a copy is believed to be in the

official file as it was discussed during the interview. Of course, if this is not the case Applicants will provide a copy to the Examiner.

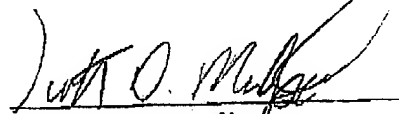
It is respectfully requested that the above information be considered by the Examiner and that an initialed copy of the enclosed Form PTO-1449 be returned indicating that such information has been considered.

CONCLUSION

Due consideration and prompt passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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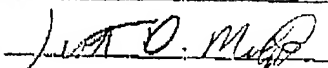
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Application No.: 09/309,766
Attorney Docket No.: 35.G2387

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1. (Twice Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, comprising the steps of:

activating a getter disposed in the vessel prior to sealing the vessel; and

after activation of the getter, [sealing] initiating a baking step to seal the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel.
4. (Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel according to Claim 3, wherein the evacuation step is executed simultaneously with at least one of the getter activation step, the heating step and the [sealing] baking step.
9. (Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel according to Claim 8, further comprising the step of reactivating the nonevaporable getter after the [sealing] baking step.
10. (Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel according to Claim 8, further comprising a getter flash step of activating an evaporable getter after the [sealing] baking step.

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12. (Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel according to Claim 11, wherein the degassing step is executed prior to the [sealing] baking step.

13. (Twice Amended) A method for manufacturing an image-forming apparatus using an airtight vessel containing a plurality of electron emission elements and image-forming members comprising the steps of:

activating a getter disposed in a vessel prior to sealing the vessel; and
after activation of the getter, [sealing] initiating a baking step to seal the
vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating
the vessel.

16. (Amended) A method for manufacturing the image-forming apparatus according to Claim 15, wherein the evacuation step is executed simultaneously with at least one of the getter activation step, the heating step and the [sealing] baking step.

21. (Amended) A method for manufacturing the image-forming apparatus according to Claim 20, further comprising the step of reactivating the nonevaporable getter after the [sealing] baking step.

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22. (Amended) A method for manufacturing the **image**-forming apparatus according to Claim 20, further comprising a getter flash **step** of **activating** an evaporable getter after the [sealing] baking step.

24. (Amended) A method for manufacturing the **image**-forming apparatus according to Claim 23, wherein the degassing step is **executed** prior to **the** [sealing] baking step.